

POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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good in the ideas of 1789, The longer he lived the more he became out of touch with his age.

A fragment written in his eightieth year, entitled *Key to my attitude during the thirty-nine years of my administration*^ was printed by his son as the last chapter of his uncompleted Memoirs. When the imbecile Ferdinand succeeded Francis in 1837 Mettemich's best time was over. Henceforth he had little influence in home affairs. The Government, he complains, did not know how to govern. The Archduke Ludwig was an excellent counsellor but not a ruler. Kolowrath, the chief authority on domestic matters, was fundamentally honourable but an administrator rather than a statesman. The machinery was slow and clumsy, and the revolution of 1848 was not altogether a surprise. In any case, he argues, it was not his fault. At times he had ruled Europe but never Austria. "If I had my career again I would follow exactly the same course. What is called the Metternich system was not a system at all but the application of the laws which govern the world. *"La force dans ie droit* has been the foundation of my creed and my acts. Liberty is the consequence of order. The only equality is equality before the law/' The plain man, he was convinced, wanted order and peace. The people was everywhere good but childish. He prided himself on his realism, remarking "Je suis la prose cristallisfe." But the champion of stability went to the grave without realizing that change is the law of life ; that the French Revolution had a constructive as well as a destructive side; that the status quo which satisfied the aristocracy was not good enough for the third and fourth estates. That the common man would grow up. if he had his chance never crossed his mind. What

can be said for his European outlook, his static ideology, his life-long struggle with nationalism and democracy, has been generously stated in Srbik's monumental biography and echoed in Mr. Algernon Cecil's thoughtful study. Bibl, the rival Austrian specialist, declares himself unconvinced. The most balanced estimates are to be found in Woodward's masterly volume, *Three Studies in 'European Conservatism'* and in Sorel's *Essais d'Histoire et de Critique*.

Guizot, the austere Protestant, the greatest French statesman between Talleyrand and Gambetta, was swept away by the same revolutionary tide as Metternich. His memoirs are perhaps the most valuable contribution of France to the category of political apologies. Politics have an important